



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

August 17, 2005

News Release

MEXICAN NATIONAL CONVICTED OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING *Woman was driving bullet-proof luxury vehicle*

MCALLEN, Texas — A federal jury here found a Mexican woman guilty of attempting to smuggle narcotics hidden inside a luxurious 323i BMW car equipped with bulletproof windows and Kevlar, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Adela Lara-Barajas, 35, was convicted on four separate counts that include: conspiracy to import into the U.S., possession with intent to distribute, and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 13 kilograms of methamphetamine worth an estimated street value of \$350,000.

The investigation began April 2, when Lara-Barajas was attempting to enter the United States through the Hidalgo, Texas, Port of Entry in a 2000 Blue BMW 323i series bearing license plates from Jalisco, Mexico. During a routine border inspection, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers discovered 13 kilograms (28.6 lbs.) of methamphetamine concealed inside a hidden compartment located in the rear of the car. In addition to the illegal drugs, the vehicle was equipped with bulletproof windows and lined with Kevlar. Lara-Barajas was arrested and turned over to ICE special agents without incident.

“The Department of Homeland Security and its law enforcement partners will do everything possible to stop the flow of illegal drugs into the United States and the State of Texas,” said Alonzo Pena, special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in San Antonio. “We will continue to partner with law enforcement agencies to detect this type of criminal activity and bring those individuals to justice.”

Juan Alaniz, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, prosecuted the case.

Sentencing for Lara-Barajas is scheduled for late October.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.